



# ELEMENTARY to MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Transition Toolkit

The Transition section of the Advising Toolkit has been created to aid educators as they prepare students as they transition from **elementary to middle school**. The Transition part of the Toolkit includes unique transition activities for this transition.

The Transition activities have also been divided into three sections: 1) the spring **BEFORE** the transition year, 2) the **BEGINNING** of the transition year, and finally 3) transition activities **THROUGHOUT** the transition year.

Included in these sections are Transition Resource lists for educators and well as Transition Resource lists for parents.

<b>Transition Activities from Elementary to Middle School</b>
<b>BEFORE 6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
<a href="#">Student Transition Activities</a>
<a href="#">Student and Family Transition Activities</a>
<a href="#">Parent Transition Activities</a>
<b>START of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
<a href="#">Student Transition Activities</a>
<a href="#">Student and Family Transition Activities</a>
<b>DURING the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Year</b>
<a href="#">Student Transition Activities</a>
<a href="#">Student and Family Transition Activities</a>



# ***Spring & Summer BEFORE 6<sup>TH</sup> Grade***

**For Students**

**For Students & Families**

**For Parents**



**TRANSITION TOOLS FOR  
MIDDLE SCHOOL  
STUDENTS**



# Write-On: Pen Pals with Middle Schoolers

**Audience:** 5<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 5<sup>th</sup> Grade (Spring)

## Overview:

Providing upcoming middle grades students an opportunity to participate in a pen-pal program with current middle grades students will help connect new students to the middle level environment and answer some of their questions about the transition. Also, it will help to teach and review letter writing for all involved.

## Procedures/ Guidelines:

- Assign each upcoming middle grades student to a student who is completing their transition year. Have students correspond 2-4 times during the last few months of the school year. Letters should address the questions and concerns of the younger student through the eyes of the older student
- The first letter should come from the current middle grades student with basic information about the school, and with questions designed to build a relationship with the younger student. For example:
  - Do you play an instrument or a sport?
  - What is your favorite subject?
  - Do you have a pet?
  - Who is your favorite performer or athlete?
- The younger student would respond to the first letter and have an opportunity to ask questions and express concerns
- Future letters could include advice for and secrets to success in the middle grades
- If possible, host a get-together for those students who wish to meet their pen-pal in person. Organize ice-breaker activities and provide refreshments. Secure parent permission from all students attending the get-together.

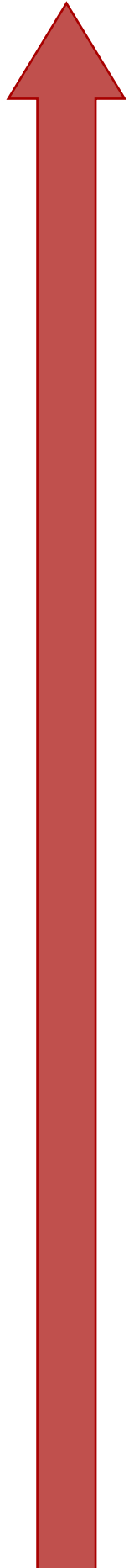
## Things to Consider:

If possible, use first names only in correspondence between students.

Always read correspondence (for appropriateness of content and language) before it is sent to another student.

## Resources:

- [Kentucky Writing Handbook](#)
- [Dear Fifth Grader](#)
- [Lesson Planning Ice Breakers](#)





# Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

**Audience:** 5<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 5<sup>th</sup> Grade (Spring)

## Procedure/ Guidelines:

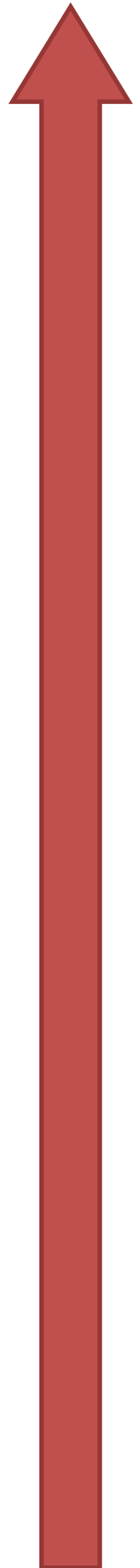
- For students who will be using the ILP for the first time as middle level students teachers/counselors can introduce the tool and allow students to explore certain components. The following directions are provided by Career Cruising:
- Thank you for your interest in Career Cruising access for your elementary students. As you may be aware, we have a partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). Students in grades 6-12 are using Career Cruising to develop their Individual Learning Plans (ILP's).
- We have also created a simplified version of Career Cruising that Kentucky elementary educators may use with students who wish to begin exploring careers prior to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. With this simplified version, students may complete the 'Matchmaker' career interest inventory, and may also search and explore additional careers.
- Because the ILP does not begin until grade 6, students in elementary schools will not be able to save any of their results into an ILP, but they may use the basics of the program to begin their exploration process.
- You have been provided access to use Career Cruising at your elementary school as a complimentary service.
- **To log into Career Cruising, please go to the following webpage, and enter the following URL:**  
[www.careercruising.com](http://www.careercruising.com)
  - **Username:** Kentucky
  - **Password:** elementary
- **Press the yellow button to start Career Cruising.**
- We hope you enjoy using the program!

## Things to Consider:

- Have students choose a career that they are interested in and conduct research on the Career Cruising ILP site (directions in resources section).
- Students could then dress as a person in their selected career and share information with other students.

## Resources

- [www.careercruising.com](http://www.careercruising.com)
- [Exploring Careers through the ILP](#)





# Getting to Know You

**Audience:** 5<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 5th Grade (Spring)

## Overview:

An important part of the transition process is arranging visits to the new setting, whether a new school or simply a different part of the building.

## Procedure/ Guidelines:

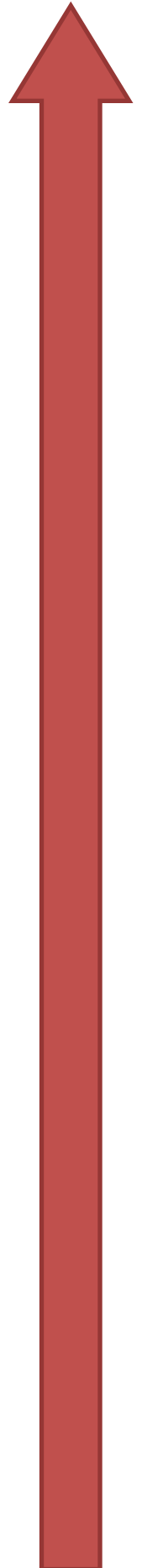
- Prior to the visit middle level school counselors and/ administrators should schedule meetings with students to discuss what the visit will entail. It is recommended that visits be conducted with each class rather than a large meeting of all classes together. If possible, visit on more than one occasion to develop a relationship with students prior to the beginning of the school year
- At least 1 week prior to the meeting ask elementary grade teachers to have students write questions they may have about middle school on index cards. Questions should be sent to middle level staff who will be conducting the meeting. This will aid them in preparing a meeting that is geared toward the needs/concerns of a specific group of students
- A day or so prior to the visit distribute a middle level vocabulary word search. Review the word search and facilitate discussions about the meaning and relevance of each word
- Provide students with a map of the school and while on tour have them highlight areas they visit

## Things to Consider:

- Provide students with a scavenger hunt of people and places that can be found in a middle level school. Have them mark off each item as they find it.
- This visit should be provided to all students who will be entering the middle level. This is not a time to exclude students due to behavioral issues. These students are perhaps in greatest need of this experience.

## Resources:

- [Scavenger Hunt](#)
- [Word Search Puzzle](#)





# Meeting them on their terms

**Audience:** 5<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 5<sup>th</sup> Grade (Spring)

## Procedures/ Guidelines:

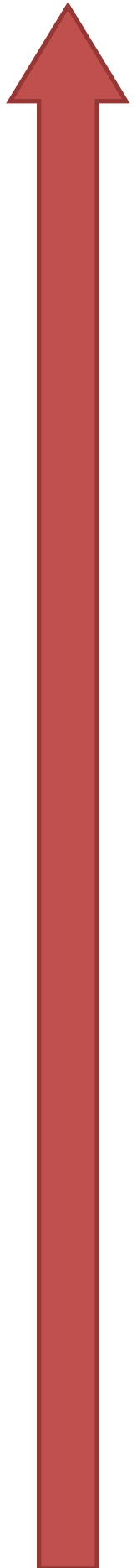
- The transition process should be taking place for the full school year prior to the move to the middle school. Middle school administrators/counselors/teachers/students should plan regularly scheduled visits to feeder elementary schools. Consider visiting at least once each term of the school year. These visits provide opportunities for students to ask pertinent questions and to become familiar with some people they will be encountering at the middle school.
- Prior to visiting, students should be surveyed to determine the issues that most concern them (sample survey in resources section). The results of the survey should be used to plan agendas for future visits thereby providing the information that is most relevant to the students.
- Rising middle school students could also write specific questions to be shared with middle school visitors in advance. These questions as well as the answers should be used to develop an “FAQ” for future visitors.

## Things to Consider:

It is recommended that visits be conducted with class size groups rather than whole grades. This leads to more informal conversations and allows students to more freely express any concerns they may have.

## Resources:

- [Identifying Student and Parent Concerns](#)





# Lock-in

**Audience:** Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** SUMMER before 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

Bringing students together in a social setting prior to the start of the school year is one way to smooth their transition into the middle grades. Holding a “lock-in” during the summer provides students with an opportunity to make new friends and establish a sense of community before the school year begins.

## Procedures/ Guidelines:

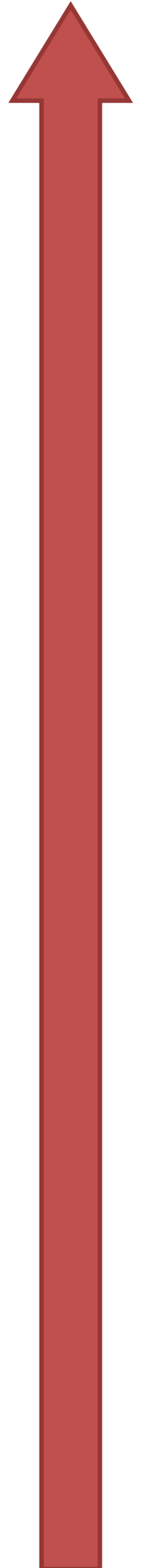
- The students can stay until midnight or spend all night at the school during the lock-in. Possible activities include:
  - icebreaker/team building activities
  - a disc jockey to lead group dances
  - karaoke singing contest
  - foosball, ping pong, air hockey, Wii games, guitar hero
  - paper airplane competition
  - scrapbooking
  - relay races in which teams are comprised of students from each feeder elementary school
  - volleyball
  - clinics conducted by upper classmen, including:
    - high school cheerleaders
    - pom-pom girls
    - club leaders
    - members of athletic teams
- Community organizations donate food and gift certificates, t-shirts, and school supplies
- Make a video of the event that can be shared with next year’s incoming class during an orientation to middle school

## Things to Consider:

Students could cast votes to select a team name (from suggestions approved by the principal) for each team, or the class as a whole. This will help to create a unique identity for this group of students. Votes could be placed by donating pennies to a cause or charity. The name with the greatest number of pennies will decide the name.

## Resources:

- [Lock-In Permission Slip](#)
- [Lesson Planning Icebreakers](#)







# Transition Camp

**Audience:** Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** SUMMER before 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

Transition camps provide an opportunity for students to acclimate to a new school environment. Camps aid in meeting the social and emotional as well as academic needs of upcoming middle grades students by offering experiences that create a sense of belonging before the school year begins.

## Procedure/ Guidelines:

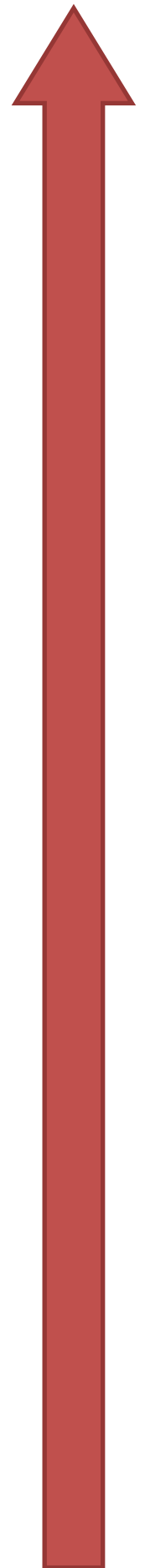
- Choose a theme for the camp (e.g., Put Your Best Foot Forward, Yes I Can, Bridge to Success, Success in the Middle)
- Ask teachers to recommend current middle grades students to serve as camp guides
- Meet with student guides and their parents to discuss responsibilities and secure written parent permission
- Meet with camp guides to develop agenda and select activities
- Visit feeder elementary schools to explain the camp and hand-out permission slips or when upcoming students visit the school, discuss the camp and hand-out permission slips
- Use a survey at the end of the camp for gathering students' feedback to use in planning for future camps
- Include sessions for students that will assist them in making a smooth transition to the middle grades and achieving academic success:
  - Study skills
  - Getting organized
  - What to expect in the middle grades
  - Bullying prevention
  - Getting to know the school staff
  - Tour of the building
  - Locker relays
  - What's an ILP?
  - Dealing with peer pressure

## Things to Consider:

- Solicit donations of school supplies to be given to students in need.
- Ask the FRYSC director to help with the Transition Camp.
- Investigate ways to provide transportation for students (e.g., public transit, donations from civic groups).
- Place puzzle pieces at different locations in the school. As the students tour the school, have them collect the puzzle pieces fitting them together to form a shape that aligns with theme for the camp.

## Resources:

- [Summer Camp Games](#)
- [Sample Camp Schedule](#)
- [Summer Camp Flyer](#)
- [Mini -Camp Leaders Permission](#)
- [Camper Survey](#)





**TRANSITION TOOLS FOR  
MIDDLE SCHOOL  
STUDENTS & FAMILIES**



# Pep Rally

**Audience:** 5<sup>th</sup> Graders & Families

**When:** 5<sup>th</sup> Grade (Spring)

## Procedure/ Guidelines:

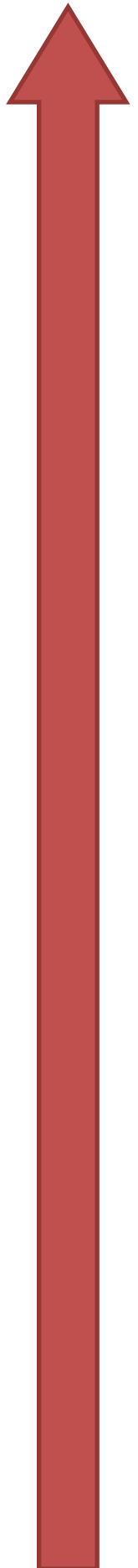
- Invite rising students/families from feeder middle schools to a pep rally to be held during out of school time (evening or weekend).
- Arrange for middle school groups (band, chorus, clubs, teams etc.) to perform and/or set-up information tables for students/families to visit.
- Counselors and administrators could staff one table where several computers provide access to the ILP website. Use this time to facilitate exploration of the tool and discuss postsecondary/career goals.
- Provide forms where students can take notes about the clubs, teams, etc. they are interested in (What should I join?).
- Encourage new students to get to know each other as well as getting to know upper classman and staff at the pep rally by completing a “Who did I meet” scavenger hunt.
- Finally, if time permits have students vote on a mascot and short cheer that can represent this class during their time in middle school. Perhaps provide a short list of options for mascots and “class name” that students can vote on. At the end of the pep rally have upper class cheerleaders guide them through a short cheer.

## Things to Consider:

- Though there will be rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders who already have extensive experience as a member of a team or club, for some this will be a new venture.
- Instruct older students who sit at information tables to ask about a student’s prior experience. It may be necessary to provide some background information and go over the expectations for participation in each club or team. Consider providing a short hand-out that students can take with them.

## Resources:

- [What Should I Join?](#)
- [Who Did I Meet?](#)





# School Expo

**Audience:** 5<sup>th</sup> Graders & Families

**When:** 5<sup>th</sup> Grade (Spring)

## Overview:

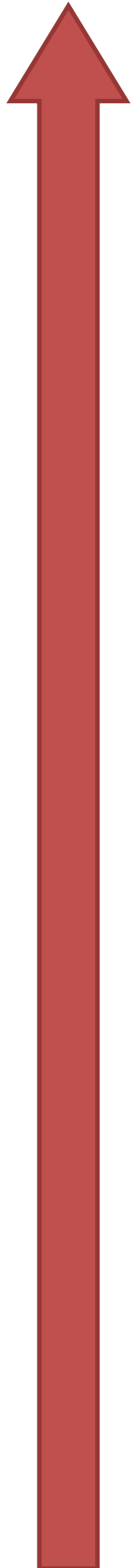
In the middle grades, students often have more opportunities to become part of school teams, clubs, and other types of student organizations than they had in the elementary grades. Participating in these types of school groups can help make a student feel more connected to the school. Use a school expo as a means for sharing information about school groups and extracurricular activities and for beginning to connect upcoming students to the middle grades.

## Procedure/ Guidelines:

- Arrange for school groups (e.g., band, chorus, cheerleaders, dance team, chess team) to perform. Display student art work and class projects from other enrichment/exploratory classes
- Have clubs, teams, and organizations set-up information tables for students/families to visit. At the tables have older students present to answer questions and talk with the younger students. Ask each group to prepare a brochure or fact sheet for handing out at their table
- Ask a counselor and/or teachers to staff a table where several computers provide access to the Career Cruising website. Use this time to facilitate exploration of the ILP
- Distribute forms on which students can take notes about the clubs, teams or organizations in which they are interested
- Encourage new students to get to know each other, as well as getting to know older students and staff, by completing a “Who did I meet” scavenger hunt form
- Have students prepare an ongoing slide show or video for playing during the expo that shows students engaged in various activities both during and after school
- Create invitations for this event and send to feeder schools for upcoming students to take home to their parents/families

## Things to Consider:

- This event could be combined with a visit for upcoming students to the middle level school or it could be held after school.
- Though many upcoming middle grades students may already have experience as a member of a team, club or other type of organization, for some this will be a new venture.
- Instruct older students who sit at information tables to ask about a student’s prior experience. It may be necessary to provide some background information and go over the expectations for participation in the club, organization, or team.
- Check to see if local businesses will post the date and time of this event on their marquees.





# Jump Start

**Audience:** Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders & Families

**When:** SUMMER before 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

Invite upcoming middle grades students and their families to attend an informational meeting regarding their transition to the middle level. Separate parents and students for the first part of the meeting and then bring them back together for the concluding activities.

## Procedure/ Guidelines:

Possible topics for the first part of the meeting:

Students	Parents/Families
<u>What will I need?</u> Supplies Attitude Books Lockers Agenda books	<u>Support and involvement in school</u> SBDM PTO/PTA Volunteering Two-way communication Completing forms Turn in medical forms
<u>Where will I go?</u> Discuss schedule Tour of the building Team organization Arrival and dismissal time Lunch	<u>Communication</u> Website IC Newsletter Homework hotline ILP E-mail
<u>What can I do?</u> Attendance Appropriate dress/dress code Behavior expectations	<u>The Middle Grades</u> The middle school concept Schedule Grading Team organization

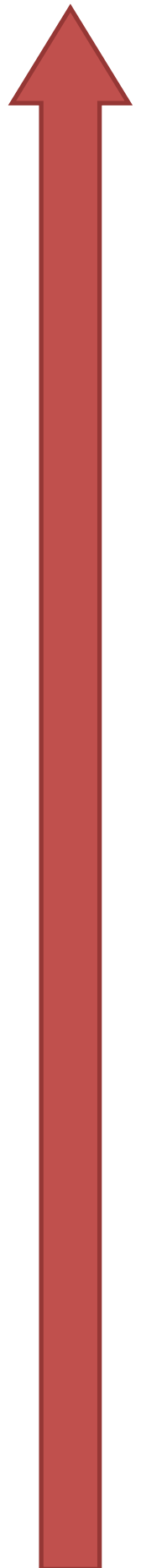
## Resources:

- [Sample Jump Start Invitation](#)
- [Sample Jump Start Letter](#)
- [Jump Start Checklist](#)

At the conclusion of the sessions, reconvene parents and students together. If time, have students and parents walk through a mini-schedule together. Conclude the Jump Start program by playing Jeopardy based on the information shared during the informational meetings. Divide the group by last names (i.e., A-M and N-Z) or by teams.

## Things to Consider:

- If possible, schedule two date options, perhaps a Saturday morning and an evening, to better accommodate family schedules.
- Secure staff members or volunteers to assist with translation for non-English speaking families, if applicable.
- Solicit donations from community vendors to provide refreshments and prizes for the Jeopardy game.
- Invite the director of transportation to be present to answer questions about bus schedules and routes.





# Success Journeys

**Audience:** Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders & Families

**When:** SUMMER before 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

An effective transition strategy for schools to consider and implement is conducting home visits. This strategy can have a very positive impact on student success and parent engagement as it helps bridge the gap between home and school and helps facilitate parent and teacher relationships. These visits can provide the teacher with much needed insights that can enhance the child's in-school education. Home visits provide an opportunity to develop a level of trust and rapport between home and school.

## Procedures/ Guidelines:

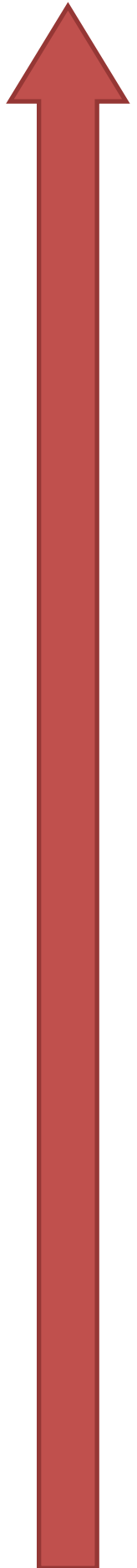
- Contact other districts that have implemented home visits either as a voluntary option (Trigg County) or as a requirement for all teachers (Mason County) to discuss implementation and monitoring of home visits
- Choose for the visits students at-risk of failure or not performing at grade level, or students who are academically capable but have other family or personal issues that present a barrier to academic success
- Provide administrative guidance and support for teachers that may be reluctant to go on home visits at first
- Facilitate a professional development opportunity for teachers who are new to the home visit process
- Review with teachers recommended practices for home visits by viewing a home visit "How to" video
- Provide a checklist of best practices that teachers can use to insure that the home visit is a positive experience for all involved
- Distribute a log that teachers can use to log visits conducted and record anecdotal notes
- Meet with teachers as a group after the visits to share experiences

## Things to Consider:

- Teachers should select students with whom they would like to develop a closer relationship in order to assist them in reaching their full potential.
- Assign teachers a partner to work with in conducting the visits.
- Ask the FRYSC coordinator to be involved with the visits.

## Resources:

- [Success Journey Letter](#)
- [Harvard Parent Teacher Home Visit Project](#)
- [Trigg County Home Visit Article](#)
- [Home Visit "How To" Video](#)





# Summer Picnic

**Audience:** Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders & Families

**When:** SUMMER before 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

Casual gatherings, such as a summer picnic, are a great way to foster a sense of community for new families before the school year begins.

## Procedure/ Guidelines:

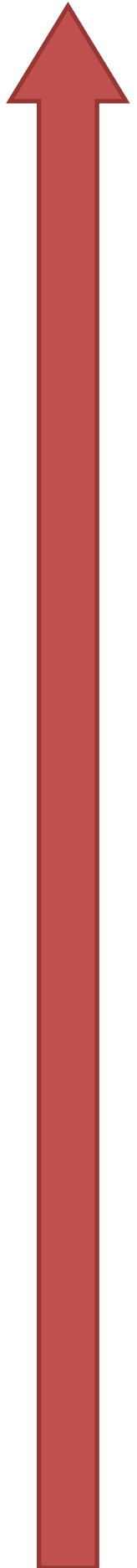
- Publicize the picnic through a variety of methods:
  - Mail letters announcing the picnic to the students that will be entering the middle grades for the first time when school begins
  - Announce in local newspaper and/or on local cable channel and radio stations
  - Send announcement to local churches to include in their bulletins
- Offer incentives for attendance (e.g., gas cards, gift certificates, school supplies, tickets for school sponsored events)
- Ask the superintendent and/or other community leaders to be guest chefs that grill hamburgers, hot dogs, and/or chicken breasts for attendees
- Have informational tables (e.g., transportation director to answer bus schedule questions, teachers to hand out supply list, counselor with forms needed to be completed) set up for parents and guardians to visit
- Organize fun activities (e.g., face painting, relay races, arts and crafts, videos) for upcoming students and their younger siblings that might attend. Ask high school service clubs to help with the activities
- Provide opportunities for interaction among families by placing tent cards on tables with “conversation starters”. At planned intervals ask families to read the card and discuss the topic at their tables

## Things to Consider:

- Ask local civic clubs to help with the cost and serving of food.
- Check with the FRYSC director for help with contacting families and making arrangements for the picnic.
- Work with ELL and/or migrant programs to insure that those populations are notified and have transportation.
- Ask the school cafeteria manager to help plan the menu and to help with the preparation of the food.
- Be sensitive to cultural differences in diet, etiquette and dining practice. Offer food selections that accommodate cultural and medical diet restrictions of the populations you serve.
- Either hold the picnic inside or if outside, have an alternative plan in case the weather is not cooperative.

## Resources:

- [World's 50 Best Foods](#)
- [Conversation Starters](#)





# What can I do about school bullying?

**Audience:** Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders & Families

**When:** SUMMER before 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

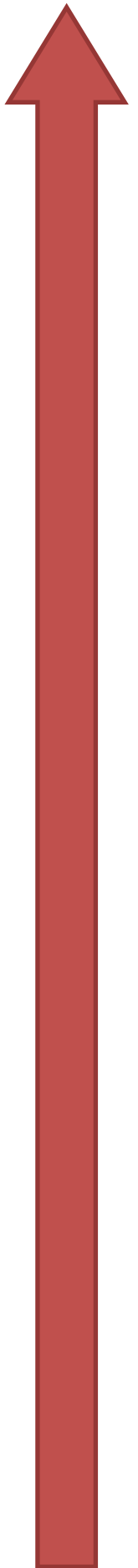
During the transition from childhood to adolescence, middle school students often place more importance on friendships and belonging to a group. They are more aware of how other kids act and look. Some kids may seem to be searching for a reason to tease or torment another student. Parents need to understand what to look for and how they can help their child deal with potential bullying at school.

## Procedure/ Guidelines:

- Begin by having parents complete the US Department of Education Bullying Quiz. Review answers and include the following parenting strategies recommended by the National School Safety Center in Fighting the Bully Battle:
  - Talk often with your child and listen carefully
  - Ask about your child's school day, activities and friends
  - Ask if your child feels safe and comfortable at school
  - Talk about what bullying means
  - Encourage your child to tell you when bullying happens at school
  - Teach that bullying is unacceptable and can be dangerous
  - Stop bullying when it happens at home
  - Be clear about your expectations and consistently discipline when hurtful teasing and bullying occurs among siblings and peers
  - Help your child understand the meaning and positive roles of friendship
  - Help your child choose positive and respectful friends
  - Teach that people can be different in many ways
  - Teach and practice basic manners
  - Help your child find and develop his/her personal talents
  - Help your child choose positive and respectful friends
  - Help your child choose TV, music and video programs that promote respect, kindness and understanding
  - Talk with your child about their school experiences and peers
- Share Bullying in Middle Schools Prevention and Intervention with parents either prior to or as a follow-up to the meeting
- Consider implementing ideas in the Stop Bullying Now Activities Guide

## Resources:

- [Bullying Quiz](#)
- [Bullying in Middle Schools Prevention and Intervention](#)
- [Stop Bullying Now Activities Guide](#)
- [KY Attorney General Urges Parents to Keep Their Kids Safe](#)
- [Fighting the Bully Battle](#)







**TRANSITION TOOLS FOR  
MIDDLE SCHOOL  
PARENTS**



# Understanding my child's growing intellect

**Audience:** Parents of incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** SUMMER before 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

In order to aid parents in supporting their children's academic growth, share and explain the implications of the intellectual development characteristics of young adolescents listed below.

## Procedures/ Guidelines:

Share "Tips for Parents" and discuss strategies parents can use to best support their child's learning:

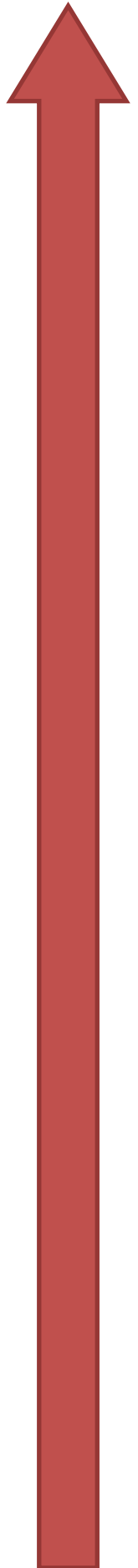
- Wide range of individual intellectual development
- Transition from concrete to abstract thinking
- Intense curiosity, wide-ranging intellectual pursuits
- Active learners
- Prefer peer interaction during learning
- Respond greatly to opportunities for participation in real life situations
- Preoccupied with self
- Strong need for approval and easily discouraged
- Developing understanding of personal abilities
- Inquisitive about adults, challenging their authority and always observing them
- May be disinterested in academic subjects but are intellectually curious about the world and themselves
- Developing capacity to understand higher levels of humor

## Things to Consider:

- Different students have different levels of intellect. As facilitator please keep in mind that each child will develop at their own pace.
- Check local agencies for summer or extracurricular enrichment activities that build upon each child's specific abilities and interests.
- All children are capable of learning at high levels. Be aware of middle school students' growing sense of gender roles and gender bias concerning subject preference or perceived ability level.

## Resources:

- [Characteristics of Young Adolescents](#)
- [Tips for Parents](#)





# Physical Development

**Audience:** Parents of incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** SUMMER before middle school

## Overview:

Children entering middle school display a wide array of developmental stages. Physical development at this age is particularly varied. Each child is developing at his/her own pace however there are some general characteristics that all children will exhibit during early adolescence.

## Procedure/Guidelines:

The following characteristics and suggestions for families can be used in speaking with parents and assisting them in understanding their children's needs.

*Most young people aged nine to 12 will:*

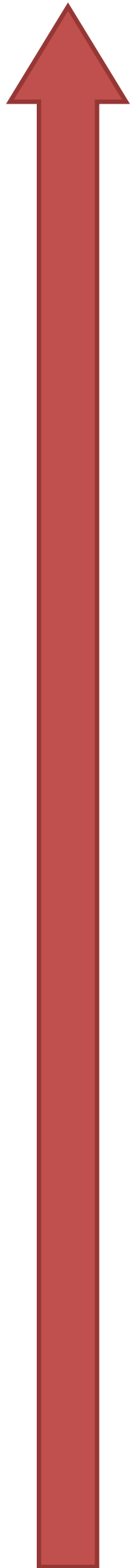
- Have an emerging sense of self as a young adult
- Feel conscious of their physical development and how they choose to express it
- Understand jokes with adult content
- Feel concerns about being normal
- Feel anxious about puberty, when it will happen, how it will occur, how to be prepared, etc.
- Feel shy about asking questions of caregivers, and may act like they already know all the answers
- Value privacy highly
- Help young people understand that, while they are maturing physically, they still have lots of emotional and cognitive growth ahead.

## Things to Consider:

- This subject matter may make some parents uncomfortable for various reasons (upbringing, religious beliefs, etc.) however, it is important that they have a basic understanding of the changes which may affect the child's academic and emotional progress.
- Check with local agencies about physical activities within your community.
- YMCAs or YWCAs, 4-H/Youth Development, local parks & recreation departments and summer enrichment programs may want to provide informational materials for families.
- The American Girl Doll company publishes a great series of books for adolescent girls that may help more shy girls gain answers to questions they would otherwise be unwilling to ask.

## Resources:

- [Tips for Parents](#)
- [Characteristics of Young Adolescents](#)





# Parent Academy: Social /Emotional Development

**Audience:** Parents of incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** SUMMER before 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

The transition to middle grades occurs at the same time when students are making the transition from childhood to adolescence. This sometimes tumultuous period of transition can negatively impact academic achievement, performance motivation, and self-perception.

## Procedures/ Guidelines:

### *They are:*

- experiencing profound physical maturation and change
- beginning to think of themselves as individuals with an identity that extends beyond their families
- exerting independence and focusing primarily on relationships with peers
- experiencing challenges at home as both parents and children struggle with changing roles

### *What can parents do?*

Parents should be encouraged to remain steadfast in their involvement in their child's education, even though they may be met with resistance from their child. The following strategies provide clear direction for parents (*full article "Health & Young Adolescents" in Resources section*).

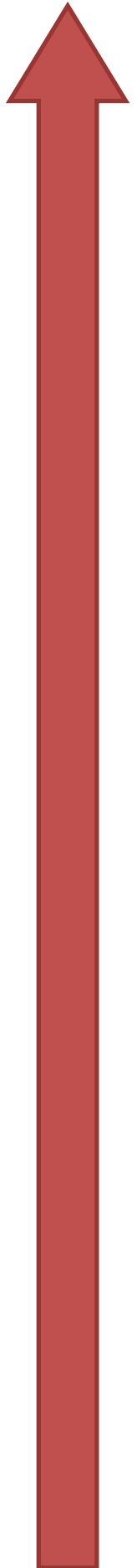
- Respect Their Privacy, But Don't Close Them Off
- Be Patient with Their Mood Swings
- Set Limits, But Give Them Some Choices
- Understand Their Need to Be Involved
- Respect Their Developing Intellect
- Show Them Why Nutrition Matters
- Let Them Know You Care

## Things to Consider:

- It may be beneficial to include your school's guidance counselor or local social services or health department in this event.
- Contact your local cooperative extension office for nutritional guidance.

## Resources:

- [Health and Young Adolescents](#)





# Parent Academy: Sexuality

**Audience:** Parents of incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** SUMMER before middle school

## Overview:

Children entering middle school display a wide array of developmental stages. Physical and sexual development at this age is particularly varied. Each child is developing at his/her own pace however there are some general characteristics that all children will exhibit during early adolescence. The following characteristics and suggestions for families can be used in speaking with parents and assisting them in understanding their children's needs (full article in resources section).

## Procedure/ Guidelines:

### ***Most young people aged nine to 12 will:***

- Have an emerging sense of self as a young adult
- Feel conscious of their sexuality and how they choose to express it
- Understand jokes with sexual content
- Feel concerns about being normal
- Feel anxious about puberty, when it will happen, how it will occur, how to be prepared, etc.
- Feel shy about asking questions of caregivers, especially regarding sexuality, and may act like they already know all the answers
- Value privacy highly

### ***To help nine- to 12-year-old youth develop a healthy sexuality, families should:***

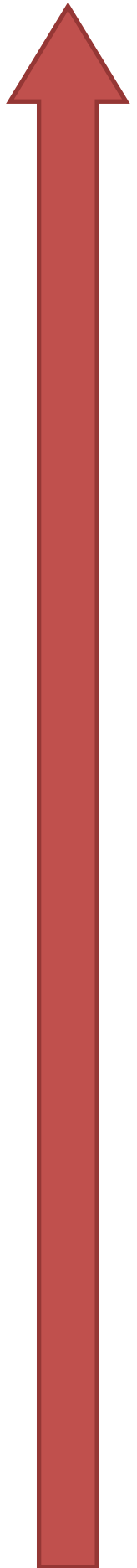
- Help young people understand puberty and the changes they are going through and that these changes, including menstruation and nocturnal emissions (ejaculation), are normal.
- Respect young people's privacy while encouraging open communication.
- Convey that growth and maturation rates differ from person to person.
- Help young people understand that, while they are maturing physically, they still have lots of emotional and cognitive growth ahead and that sexual intercourse is not healthy, appropriate, or wise at this time in their lives.
- Acknowledge that abstinence is normal and healthy, that sexual development is healthy and natural, and that, as they grow older, there will be many ways to express sexuality that do not include sexual intercourse.
- Discuss the important relationship between sexual and emotional feelings.
- Be open to conversations about contraception and condoms and respond honestly and accurately when young people ask about them.

## Things to Consider:

- The local health department can be a good source for workshops, speakers and materials.
- This subject matter may make some parents uncomfortable for various reasons (upbringing, religious beliefs, etc.) however, it is important that they have a basic understanding of the child's new awareness of their own sexuality and how this may affect academic and emotional progress.

## Resources:

- [Growth and Development, Ages 9 to 12](#)





# Parent Academy: Cyber Bullying and Cyber Safety

**Audience:** Parents of Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** SUMMER before 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

During the transition from childhood to adolescence, middle school students often place more importance on friendships and belonging to a group. They are more aware of how other kids act and look. Some kids may seem to be searching for a reason to tease or torment another student.

## Warning Signs: (KDE Dropout Prevention Resource Guide, link provided in resource section)

- Social withdrawal
- Excessive feelings of rejection
- Being a victim of violence
- Feeling of being picked on and persecuted
- Low interest in school and poor academic performance
- Expression of violence in writings and drawings
- Uncontrollable anger
- Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and bullying behaviors
- History of discipline problems.
- Prejudicial attitudes
- Drug and alcohol use
- Affiliation with gangs
- Inappropriate access to, possession of, and use of firearms
- Serious threats of violence

## Share prevention/intervention strategies:

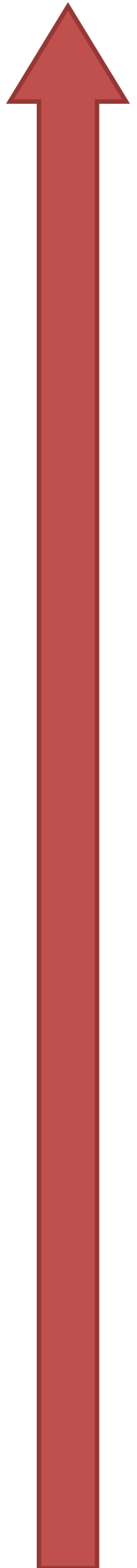
- Shared responsibility among child, school, home, and community
- Support students in being responsible for their actions. Students need to be actively involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating violence prevention/intervention programs.
- Teaching positive and socially acceptable skills, such as anger management and problem solving skills.
- Encouraging families to keep firearms out of the reach of children.

## Things to Consider:

- Share a list of contacts within and outside of the school for students who are experiencing thoughts of self-harm.
- Invite a local child psychologist or psychiatrist to speak about youth and social media.
- Invite local law enforcement to discuss illegal drug use and abuse among youth and teens.

## Resources:

- [Bullying in Middle Schools Prevention and intervention](#)
- [Stop Bullying Now Activities Guide](#)
- [KY Attorney General urges parents to keep their kids safe](#)





# Connecting to Content

**Audience:** Parents of incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** SUMMER before 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

Engaging parents with the curriculum their children will be following is an important step to insuring academic success. Sessions offered should include content specifics: what your child will be learning in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and elective courses

## Procedures/ Guidelines:

- Sessions should be presented by content teachers and include:
  - basic content specific vocabulary
  - syllabus for the academic year
  - course expectations
  - an abbreviated demonstration lesson
- This is a time to share contact information, homework hotlines or virtual homework listings.
- Discuss teacher specific grading practices, for example share your policy for late work or extra credit options
- Share a rubric and explain its use. Display samples of proficient student work with scoring guides so that parents understand what is expected of their student
- Provide parents with supply lists and any information regarding large or long-term projects, assignments and activities
- Discuss strategies parents can use to best assist their children with homework or projects
- Share options for parents to visit or volunteer in the school

## Things to Consider:

- It may be helpful to create a simple explanation of Common Core and how parents might find more information if interested in the subject.
- If supply lists are going to be presented, have a Family Resource Coordinator on hand to be able to direct families who may be in financial need to free or reduced prices for school supplies.
- Have a copy of the school's student handbook on hand for review by parents.
- Display a sample progress report or report card for parents to look at.

## Resources:

- [Overview of Kentucky Curriculum/Content Areas](#)
- [Help with Homework](#)

